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Cure of the Gout.

See Page 6.

THE
CURE
OF
THE GOUT:

AN AMUSING TALE.



ADORNED WITH CUTS.



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AN ANTI-SLAVERY

AND

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AND OTHERS, 1841.

WELLINGTON

CURE

OF

THE GOUT.



IN one of the provinces of Italy there lived a wealthy gentleman, who, having no taste either for improving his mind, or exercising his body, acquired an habit of eating almost all day long. The whole extent of his thoughts was what he should eat for dinner, and how he should procure the greatest delicacies.

Italy produces excellent wines; but these were not enough for our epicure. He settled agents in different parts of France and Spain, to buy up all the most ge-

nerous and costly wines of those countries. He had correspondences with all the maritime cities, that he might be constantly supplied with every species of fish. Every poulterer and fishmonger in the town was under articles to let him have his choice of rarities. He also employed a man on purpose to give directions for his pastry and desserts.

As soon as he had breakfasted in the morning, it was his constant practice to retire to his library; for he too had a library, although he never opened a book.

When he was there, he gravely seated himself in an easy chair, and, tucking a napkin under his chin, ordered his head cook to be sent in to him. The head cook instantly appeared, attended by a couple of footmen, who

carried each a silver salver of a prodigious size, on which were cups which contained sauces of every different flavour which could be devised. The gentleman, with the greatest solemnity, used to dip a bit of bread in each, and taste it; giving his orders upon the subject with as much earnestness and precision as if he had been signing papers for the government of a kingdom.

When this important affair was thus happily concluded, he generally threw himself upon a couch, to repair the fatigues of such an exertion, and refresh himself against dinner. When that delightful hour arrived, it is impossible to describe either the variety of fish, flesh, and fowl, which was set before him, or the surprising greediness with which he ate of all; stimulating his appetite

with the highest sauces and richest wines, till at length he was obliged to desist, not from being satisfied, but from mere inability to contain more.

This kind of life he had long pursued, but at last became so corpulent that he could hardly move. His belly appeared prominent like a mountain, his face was bloated, and his legs, though swelled to the size of columns, seemed unable to support the prodigious weight of his body. Added to this, he was troubled with continual indigestions, and racking pains in several of his limbs, which at length terminated in a violent fit of the gout. The pains, indeed, at length abated, and this unfortunate epicure returned to all his former habits of intemperance.

The interval of ease however

was short, and the attacks of his disease becoming more and more frequent, he was at length deprived of the use of almost all his limbs.

In this unhappy state he determined to consult a physician that lived in the same town, and had the reputation of performing many surprising cures.

“Doctor, (said the gentleman to the physician, when he arrived,) you see the miserable state to which I am reduced.”

“I do, indeed, (answered the physician;) and I suppose you have contributed to it by your own intemperance.”

“As to intemperance, (replied the gentleman,) I believe few have less to answer for than myself; I indeed love a moderate dinner and supper, but I never was intoxicated with liquor in my life.”

“Probably then you sleep too much,” answered the physician.

“As to sleep, (said the gentleman,) I am in bed near twelve hours every night, because I find the sharpness of the morning air extremely injurious to my constitution; but I am so troubled with a plaguy flatulency and heart-burn, that I am scarce able to close my eyes all night; or, if I do, I find myself almost strangled with wind, and wake in agonies.”

“That is a very alarming symptom, indeed, (replied the doctor;) I wonder so many restless nights do not entirely wear you out.”

“They would, indeed, (answered the gentleman,) if I did not make a shift to procure a little sleep two or three times a day, which enables me to hold out a little longer.”

“As to exercise, (continued the doctor,) I fear you are not able to use a great deal.”

“Alas! (answered the sick man,) while I was able, I never failed to go out in my carriage once or twice a week; but, in my present situation, I can no longer bear the gentlest motion. Besides disordering my whole frame, it gives me such intolerable twitches in my limbs, that you would imagine I was absolutely falling to pieces.”

“Your case, (answered the physician,) is indeed bad, but not quite desperate; and, if you could abridge the quantity of your food and sleep, you would in a short time find yourself much better.”

“Alas! (answered the sick man,) I find you little know the

delicacy of my constitution, or you would not put me upon a method which will infallibly destroy me. When I rise in the morning, I feel as if all the powers of life were extinguished within me; my stomach is oppressed with nausea, my head with aches and swimming, and, above all, I feel such an intolerable sinking in my spirits, that, without the assistance of two or three cordials and some restorative soup, I am confident I never could get through the morning. Now, doctor, I have such a confidence in your skill, that there is no pill or potion you can order me, which I will not take with pleasure; but as to a change in my diet, that is impossible."

"That is, (answered the physician,) you wish for health with-



The Physician consulted.



out being at the trouble of acquiring it, and imagine that all the consequences of an ill-spent life are to be washed away by a julep, or a decoction of senna. But as I cannot cure you upon those terms, I will not deceive you for an instant. Your case is out of the power of medicine, and you can only be relieved by your own exertion."

"How hard is this, (answered the gentleman,) to be thus abandoned to despair even in the prime of life! Cruel and unfeeling doctor, will you not attempt anything to procure me ease?"

"Sir, (answered the physician,) I have already told you every thing I know upon the subject, I must, however, acquaint you, that I have a brother physician who lives at Padua, a man of the

greatest learning and integrity, who is particularly famous for curing the gout. If you think it worth your while to consult him, I will give you a letter of recommendation; for he never stirs from home, even to attend a Prince."

Here the conversation ended; for the gentleman, who did not like the trouble of the journey, took his leave of the physician.

In a little while he either was, or fancied himself, worse; and as the idea of the Paduan physician had never left his head, he at last resolutely determined to set out upon the journey. For this purpose he had a litter so contrived that he could lie recumbent, or recline at his ease and eat his meals. The distance was not above one day's tolerable journey, but the gentleman wisely resolved

to make four of it, for fear of over-fatiguing himself. He had, besides, a loaded waggon attending, filled with every thing that constitutes good eating; and two of his cooks went with him, that nothing might be wanting to his accommodation upon the road.

After a wearisome journey, he at length arrived within sight of Padua, and eagerly inquiring after the house of Dr. Ramozini, was soon directed to the spot. Then, having been helped out of his carriage by half-a-dozen of his servants, he was shewn into a neat but plain parlour, from which he had the prospect of twenty or thirty people at dinner in a spacious hall. In the middle of them was the learned doctor himself, who with much complacence invited the company to eat heartily.

“ My good friend, (said the doctor, to a pale-looking man on his right hand,) you must eat three slices more of this roast beef, or you will never lose your ague. My friend, (said he, to another,) drink off this glass of porter; it is just arrived from England, and is a specific for nervous fevers. Do not stuff your child so with macaroni, (added he, turning to a woman,) if you would wish to cure him of the scrofula. Good man, (said he, to a fourth,) how goes on the ulcer in your leg?”

“ Much better indeed, (replied the man,) since I have lived at your honour’s table.” “ Well, (replied the physician,) in a fortnight you will be perfectly cured, if you do but drink wine enough.”

“ Thank heaven, (said the gentleman,) who had heard all this



Medical Hospitality.



Temple of Minerva

with infinite pleasure, I have at last met with a reasonable physician; he will not confine me to bread and water, nor starve me under pretence of curing me, like that confounded quack from whose clutches I have so luckily escaped."

At length the doctor dismissed his company, who retired loading him with thanks and blessings. He then approached the gentleman, and welcomed him with the greatest politeness, who presented him with his letter of recommendation; which after the physician had perused, he thus accosted him.

"Sir, the letter of my learned friend has fully instructed me in the particulars of your case; it is indeed a difficult one, but I think you have no reason to despair of a

perfect recovery. If, (added he,) you choose to put yourself under my care, I will employ all the secrets of my art for your assistance; but one condition is absolutely indispensable: you must send away all your servants, and solemnly engage to follow my prescriptions for at least a month; without this compliance I would not undertake the cure even of a monarch."

"Doctor, (answered the gentleman,) what I have seen of your profession, does not, I confess, much prejudice me in their favour, and I should hesitate to agree to such a proposal from any other individual."

"Do as you like, Sir, (answered the physician;) the employing me, or not, is entirely voluntary on your part. But as I am above

the common mercenary views of gain, I never stake the reputation of so noble an art, without a rational prospect of success. And what success can I hope for in so obstinate a disorder, unless the patient will consent to a fair experiment of what I can effect?"

“Indeed, (replied the gentleman,) what you say is so candid, and your whole behaviour so much interests me in your favour, that I will immediately give you proofs of the most unbounded confidence.”

He then sent for his servants, and ordered them to return home, and not to come near him till a whole month was elapsed. When they were gone, the physician asked him how he supported the journey.

“Why really, (answered he,) much better than I could have expected. But I feel myself unusually hungry; and therefore, with your permission, shall beg to have the hour of supper a little hastened.”

“Most willingly, (answered the doctor:) at eight o’clock, every thing shall be ready for your entertainment. In the mean time you will permit me to visit my patients.”

While the physician was absent, the gentleman was pleasing his imagination with the thoughts of the excellent supper he should make. “Doubtless, (said he to himself,) if Signior Ramozini treats the poor in such an hospitable manner, he will spare nothing for the entertainment of a man of my importance. I have heard

there are delicious trouts and ortolans in this part of Italy. I make no doubt but the doctor keeps an excellent cook; and I shall have no reason to repent the dismissal of my servants."

With these ideas he kept himself some time amused; at length his appetite growing keener and keener every instant, from fasting longer than ordinary, he lost all patience, and calling one of the servants of the house, inquired for some little nice thing to stay his stomach till the hour of supper.

"Sir, (said the servant,) I would gladly oblige you, but it is as much as my place is worth: my master is the best and most generous of men; but so great is his attention to his house patients, that he will not suffer one of them to eat unless in his presence.

However, Sir, have patience; in two hours more the supper will be ready, and then you may indemnify yourself for all."

Thus was the gentleman compelled to pass two hours more without food, a degree of abstinence he had not practised for almost twenty years. He complained bitterly of the slowness of time, and was continually inquiring what was the hour. At length the doctor returned punctual to his time, and ordered the supper to be brought in. Accordingly six dishes were set upon the table, with great solemnity, all under cover, and the gentleman flattered himself he should now be rewarded for his long abstinence.

As they were sitting down to table, the learned Ramozini thus accosted his guest: "Before you



The Supper.



THE SEATED

give a loose to your appetite, Sir, I must acquaint you that, as the most effectual method of subduing this obstinate disease, all your food and drink will be mixed up with such medical substances as your case requires. They will not be indeed discoverable by any of your senses; but as their effects are equally strong and certain, I must recommend to you to eat with moderation." Having said this, he ordered the dishes to be uncovered, which, to the extreme astonishment of the gentleman, contained nothing but olives, dried figs, dates, some roasted apples, a few boiled eggs, and a piece of hard cheese.

"Heaven and earth! (cried the gentleman, losing all patience at this mortifying spectacle,) is this the entertainment you have pre-

pared for me, with so many speeches and prefaces? Do you imagine that a person of my fortune can sup on such contemptible fare as would hardly satisfy the wretched peasants whom I saw at dinner in your hall?"

"Have patience, my dear Sir, (replied the physician;) it is the extreme anxiety I have for your welfare that compels me to treat you with this apparent incivility. Your blood is all in a ferment with the violent exercise you have undergone; and, were I rashly to indulge your craving appetite, a fever or pleurisy might be the consequence. But to-morrow I hope you will be cooler, and then you may live in a style more adapted to your quality."

The gentleman began to comfort himself with this reflection,

and, as there was no help, he at last determined to wait with patience another night. He accordingly tasted a few of the dates and olives, ate a piece of cheese with a slice of excellent bread, and found himself more refreshed than he could have imagined was possible from such a homely meal. When he had nearly supped, he wanted something to drink, and observing nothing but water upon the table, desired one of the servants to bring him a little wine.

“Not as you value the life of this illustrious gentleman, (cried out the physician.) Sir, (added he, turning to his guest,) it is with inexpressible reluctance that I contradict you, but wine would be at present a mortal poison; therefore please to content yourself, for one night only, with a

glass of this most excellent and refreshing mineral water."

The gentleman was again compelled to submit, and drank the water with a variety of strange grimaces. After the cloth was removed, Signior Ramozini entertained the gentleman with some agreeable and improving conversation, for about an hour, and then proposed to his patient that he should retire to rest. This proposal the gentleman gladly accepted, as he found himself fatigued with his journey and unusually disposed to sleep. The doctor then retired, and ordered one of his servants to shew the gentleman to his chamber. He was accordingly conducted into a neighbouring room, where there was little to be seen, but a homely bed without furniture, with no-



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



The Bedchamber.

thing to sleep upon but a mattress almost as hard as the floor. At this the gentleman burst into a violent passion again: "Villain, (said he to the servant,) it is impossible your master should dare to confine me to such a wretched dog-hole; shew me into another room immediately!"

"Sir, (answered the servant with profound humility,) I am heartily sorry the chamber does not please you; but I am morally certain I have not mistaken my master's order, and I have too great a respect for you to think of disobeying him in a point which concerns your precious life."

Saying this, he went out of the room, and shutting the door on the outside, left the gentleman to his meditations. They were not very agreeable at first; however, as he saw no remedy, he undressed

himself and entered the wretched bed, where he presently fell asleep, while he was meditating revenge upon the doctor and his whole family.

The gentleman slept so soundly that he did not awake till morning, and then the physician came into his room, and with the greatest tenderness and civility inquired after his health. He had indeed fallen asleep in a very ill-humour, but his night's rest had much composed his mind, and the effect of this was increased by the extreme politeness of the doctor; so that he answered with tolerable temper, only making bitter complaints of the homeliness of his accommodation.

“ My dearest Sir, (answered the physician,) did I not make a previous agreement with you, that you should submit to my ma-

nagement? Can you imagine that I have any other end in view than the improvement of your health? It is not possible that you should in every thing perceive the reasons of my conduct, which is founded upon the most accurate theory and experience. However, in this case, I must inform you that I have found out the art of making my very beds medicinal; and this you must confess, from the excellent night you have passed. I cannot impart the same salutary virtues to down or silk, and therefore, though very much against my inclinations, I have been compelled to lodge you in this homely manner. But now, if you please, it is time to rise."

Ramozini then rang for his servants, and the gentleman suffered himself to be dressed. At breakfast the gentleman expected

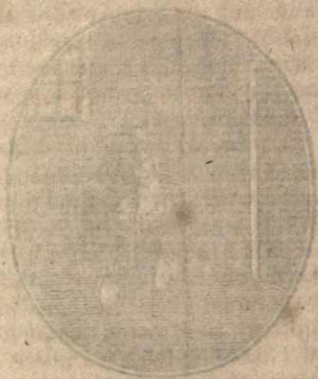
to fare a little better ; but his relentless guardian would suffer him to taste nothing but a slice of bread and a porringer of water-gruel, all which he defended, very little to his guest's satisfaction, upon the most unerring principles of medical science.

After breakfast had been some time finished, Doctor Ramozini told his patient it was time to begin the great work of restoring him to the use of his limbs. He accordingly had him carried into a little room, where he desired the gentleman to attempt to stand.

“ That is impossible, (answered the patient,) for I have not been able to use a leg these three years.”

“ Prop yourself then upon your crutches, and lean against the wall to support yourself,” answered the physician.

The gentleman did so, and the



THE CITY OF BOSTON

1850



The Cure advanced.

doctor went abruptly out, and locked the door after him. He had not been long in this situation, before he felt the floor of the chamber, which he had not before perceived to be composed of plates of iron, grow immoderately hot under his feet. He called the doctor and his servants, but to no purpose; he then began to utter loud vociferations and menaces, but all was equally ineffectual; he raved, he swore, he promised, he entreated, but nobody came to his assistance, and the heat grew more intense every instant. At length, necessity compelled him to hop upon one leg in order to rest the other, and this he did with greater agility than he could conceive was possible; presently the other leg began to burn, and then he hopped again upon the other. Thus he went on hopping about,

with this involuntary exercise, till he had stretched every sinew and muscle more than he had done for several years before, and thrown himself into a profuse perspiration.

When the doctor was satisfied with the exertions of his patient, he sent into the room an easy chair for him to rest upon, and suffered the floor to cool as gradually as it had been heated. Then it was that the sick man for the first time began to be sensible of the real use and pleasure of repose; he had earned it by fatigue, without which it can never prove either salutary or agreeable.

At dinner, the doctor appeared again to his patient, and made him a thousand apologies for the liberties he had taken with his person; these excuses he received with a kind of sullen civility; however, his anger was a little

mitigated by the smell of a roasted pullet, which was brought to table and set before him. He now, from exercise and abstinence, began to find a relish in his victuals which he had never done before, and the doctor permitted him to mingle a little wine with his water. These compliances however were so extremely irksome to his temper, that the month seemed to pass away as slowly as a year. When it was expired, and his servants came to ask his orders, he instantly threw himself into his carriage without taking leave either of the doctor or his family.

When he came to reflect upon the treatment he had received, his forced exercises, his involuntary abstinence, and all the other mortifications he had undergone, he could not conceive but it must be

a plot of the physician he had left behind, and, full of rage and indignation, drove directly to his house, in order to reproach him with it. The physician happened to be at home, but scarcely knew his patient again, though after so short an absence. He had shrunk to half his former bulk, his look and colour were mended, and he had entirely thrown away his crutches. When he had given vent to all that his anger could suggest, the physician coolly answered in the following manner.

“ I know not, Sir, what right you have to make me these reproaches, since it was not by my persuasion that you put yourself under the care of Doctor Ramozini.”

“ Yes, Sir, but you gave a high character of his skill and integrity.”

“ Has he then deceived you in

either, or do you find yourself worse than when you put yourself under his care?"

"I cannot say that, (answered the gentleman,) I am, to be sure, surprisingly improved in my digestion: I sleep better than ever I did before; I eat with an appetite; and I can walk almost as well as ever I could in my life."

"And do you seriously come (said the physician) to complain of a man that has effected all these miracles for you in so short a time, and, unless you are now wanting to yourself, has given you a degree of life and health which you had not the smallest reason to expect?"

The gentleman, who had not sufficiently considered all these advantages, began to look a little confused, and the physician thus went on.


“ All that you have to complain of is, that you have been involuntarily your own dupe, and cheated into health and happiness. You went to Doctor Ramozini, and saw a parcel of miserable wretches comfortably at dinner. That great and worthy man is the father of all about him: he knows that most of the diseases of the poor originate in their want of food and necessaries; and therefore benevolently assists them with better diet and clothing. The rich, on the contrary, are generally the victims of their own sloth and intemperance; and therefore he finds it necessary to use a contrary method of cure—exercise, abstinence, and mortification. You, Sir, have been indeed treated like a child, but it has been for your own advantage. Neither your bed, nor meat, nor drink, has

ever been medicated; all the wonderful change that has been produced, has been by giving you better habits, and rousing the slumbering powers of your own constitution. As to deception, you have none to complain of, except what proceeded from your own foolish imagination; which persuaded you that a physician was to regulate his conduct by the folly and intemperance of his patient. As to all the rest, he only promised to exert all the secrets of his art for your cure; and this, I am witness, he has done so effectually, that were you to reward him with half your fortune, it would hardly be too much for his deserts."

The gentleman, who did not want either sense or generosity, could not help feeling the force of what was said. He therefore

made a handsome apology for his behaviour, and instantly dispatched a servant to Doctor Ramozini, with a handsome present, and a letter expressing the highest gratitude. And so much satisfaction did he find in the amendment of his health and spirits, that he never again relapsed into his former habits of intemperance; but, by constant exercise and uniform moderation, continued free from any considerable disease to a very comfortable old age.

FINIS.



Houlstons, Printers.

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